

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Hungary
SUBJECT Suspected Sabotage by Ministry of
Public Education.

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. A downward trend in the number of pupils in the higher grades of general schools and universities in Hungary is blamed on an "insidious and planned strategical operation of the class enemy."
2. *LABAD NEM*, central organ of the Hungarian People's Party, accused the "former ruling class" of fighting a tooth and nail battle to preserve its monopoly in the field of culture. The strategy followed by the class enemy, the paper said, is to try to sabotage the Five-Year Plan by cutting off the influx of professional cadres needed for its execution. Its attack is concentrated against the "democratic public education of worker and peasant children."
3. Current figures in Hungary indicate that the "cultural monopoly" of the former ruling class was broken and replaced by the monopoly of the present ruling class. In this school year 10,084 worker and 7,259 peasant pupils attend the first grade of the high schools. This is 57.7 percent of the national total for the first high school grade. The first-year classes of the universities and technical colleges are attended this year by 3,315 worker and 2,146 peasant students, that is about half of the total registrants in this class. In 1950, the number of high school students increased to 87 thousand as compared to 54 thousand in 1940.
4. However, Communists became aware that the attack of the "class enemy" is gradually making itself felt on the less strictly controlled educational front. Statistics of *LABAD NEM* prove that last year 45.5 percent and this year 22.1 percent fewer students registered in the eighth grade of the general schools than the number who completed the seventh grade. In all other higher grades of the general schools the situation is much the same except in the fifth grade, where a noted increase of students is indicated. This, however, can be ascribed to the large number of students who flunked the fifth grade and now have to repeat it, *LABAD NEM* pointed out. An average of 15 percent of the pupils failed to pass the annual exams in each grade and the half-term exams showed that 23.61 percent had unsatisfactory marks to qualify them for the next half-term. Students of worker and peasant descent comprise 19 percent of those who failed to pass the exams. The end result, the Communist paper stressed, was a 16 percent drop in registrations this year for the first semester of the universities.

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5. "The reason for this considerable decrease in the number of students is that an insidious and well-planned sabotage activity is lurking behind the large number of failures at the exams."
6. The three principal grades where the highest percentage of flunkings occur are in the fifth grade of general schools, the first grades of gymnasiums (schools preparatory to the universities), and the first terms of universities. "It is the tactical device of the enemy to insert, after several easy grades, a grade in which requirements are suddenly raised. In the first grade of gymnasium, for example, the struggling pupil has to cope with textbooks at university level instead of making him digest and consolidate what he has learned in the preceding years." For this crowding of the curriculum in high schools and universities, the aim for a "higher cultural level" of the school reform is blamed and its authors, "certain officials of the Ministry of Public Education," accused of "attempting to eliminate students of worker and peasant descent who stand on weaker cultural foundation" than children of the former ruling class. "Overburdening the plan of studies has also made professional training difficult and raised obstacles in the way of improved ideological schooling."
7. A department called the "section of principles" of the Ministry of Public Education has especially provoked the ire of SAMBAD NEA. This section, the paper said, ordered 3,900,000 copies of textbooks, the larger part of which had a "reactionary and clerical spirit." More than one quarter of them were unused and had to be sent back to a paper mill to be made into pulp. Their value represented almost three million forints. In 1949, on the other hand, when a large number of pupils of worker and peasant descent registered in the schools for the first time and "when upon the increased control of the Party the textbooks were improved," only one and a half million copies were made available at the beginning of the school season instead of the required four million. "Of course, the working class pupils were the most seriously affected by this shortage, provided with textbook-coupons they were at a disadvantage to cash buyers. The past and present heads of the Ministry are to be held responsible for the untenable situation that a considerable number of pupils obtained their textbooks only shortly before the final exams."
8. Progressive Catholic ethnographer Gyula Ortutay, a Smallholder Party holdover, resigned 27 Feb 50 as Minister of Public Education, a post he held for almost three years, and was appointed superintendent of museums and galleries.

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